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Paid Media— Prerequisites To Advertising Success

Before we get into the sizzle of how to put together a high-profile direct mail, print media, and electronic media advertising campaign, we have to cover the conditions that must be present before any kind of paid media are employed in your marketing program.

While the right advertising program can help you build and maintain market presence, advertising alone will not increase your sales and occupancy. This point is so important—and so often misunderstood—that it needs to be said again: Advertising alone will not fill your building.

Advertising does nothing more than remove the “barrier of ignorance” about the presence of your community. It may increase lead activity, but as you know, leads are not sales. Too often, organizations will launch expensive advertising campaigns before they have implemented the preceding critical marketing components. As a result, leads are generated, but opportunities for sales are missed.

The industry's misuse of paid media brings to mind an old military axiom: Amateurs discuss strategy; experts discuss logistics. In our case, amateurs discuss advertising strategies; experts discuss marketing logistics. Splashy advertising will not compensate for a disjointed or deficient frontline marketing effort.

Test Your Readiness

Before you pursue any kind of advertising strategy, take the following quiz to determine if your program is prepared to employ paid media. You should be able to answer "yes" to each question.

Prerequisites-To-Advertising-Success Quiz

- _____ Have you identified your market service area?
- _____ Do you have a lock on your target market profile and their location within your market service area?
- _____ Have you determined the lead and sales objectives and identified your marketing strategy?
- _____ Does your community communicate a message of quality through the actions, attitudes, and appearance of the staff, and the appearance of the physical plant?
- _____ Do you have adequate manpower to fulfill the sales objective?
- _____ Has the marketing and sales team been trained and tooled to achieve the sales objective?
- _____ Are your MKIS and lead-management protocols in place?
- _____ Have you articulated the lead and sales objectives and the staff's performance goals to the team?
- _____ Is the sales team meeting or exceeding the program's goals and objectives (prospect contacts, sales, and optimum close rate)?
- _____ Has a grass roots networking program been fully implemented?
- _____ Is there a special events plan in place?
- _____ Is your marketing impression first-rate—from the appearance of your information center to the professional look and messages in your collateral materials?